

**Developmental Disabilities Council
Public Policy Committee
DRAFT MINUTES
November 17, 2005**

Present: Lori Flood (chair), Janet Adams, (DDD), Bill Anderson, Leo Finnegan, Larry Garman, Tabitha Harrison (DOH), Leandro Razo, Mark Stroh (WPAS), Diana Zottman

Guest: Cecile Lindquist

Staff: Donna Patrick

Call to Order /Adjust Agenda / Approve September Minutes

Lori called the meeting to order and introductions were made. There were no adjustments to the agenda.

MOTION: Public Policy Committee approve the September meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Committee Meeting Process

Lori led a discussion about making committee meetings go smoothly by agreeing to some ground rules. The group agreed. It was pointed out that the Council is a policy board, which means determining what it wants done on big issues of the day. Discussions should be kept at a policy level. That means determining what the issues are and what is appropriate for the Council to do regarding those issues. It is not necessary or appropriate for a policy board to go into extensive detail about how the “what” will be done.

Education Reform in Washington State

Cecile Lindquist was the guest speaker. She talked about Washington State’s education reform efforts and former Governor Gardner’s Education Reform group. They are concerned with the “one high stakes test” approach of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test. Only 35-40% of students taking the test are currently passing it. Some states are moving to using multiple measures for graduation, such as portfolios, project-based learning, internships, industry certification and classroom-based assessment for all children. The group will be asking the Legislature to not require the WASL for all 2008 high school graduates.

She also talked about the school district special education funding lawsuit (on hold), the need to increase funding of basic education to drive up funding for special education and the Governor's Washington Learns Task Force. The final discussion was on the history and importance of the Birth to Three bill that will be back before the Legislature this session.

Report from Best Practices in Public Policy Conference

Lori, Diana and Donna reported on their impressions and what they learned at the first national DD Council public policy conference. Washington State appears to be very progressive in terms of committing resources and organizational efforts to a coordinated, comprehensive public policy advocacy and capacity building effort. Donna distributed copies of her presentation on Washington's public policy efforts to the Committee.

Report on Interim Task Forces

Donna reported on meetings of the Governor's DD Residential Advisory Council (Lori is a member) and the Caring for Individuals with Autism Task Force. They have both had two meetings and gone over some factual information. The Council will continue to participate and monitor.

Public Policy Issues / Working Age Adult Policy Reading 05-P7

Janet explained the policy that the Division and counties developed. It is based on the premise that everyone should work and making money is the surest way to a good life. It reaffirms the importance of employment. "Pathway" to employment in the policy does not necessarily mean employed. The intent is not for people to lose community access.

Clare provided background on the work of the Council's Self-Determination and Employment Workgroup on employment issues.

The Committee affirmed the goal and value of employment for people with developmental disabilities. However, a number of people have expressed concerns and fears about the policy, particularly how some aspects will be defined and interpreted. Concerns expressed include:

- Living wages
- Pathway to employment
- Potential loss of benefits
- Transportation (or lack of)
- Losing ground when there is a budget crisis (cuts to services)

- Inadequate funding to make it happen successfully
- Attitudes (state looking at parents as trying to hold their sons and daughters back)
- The policy targets parents when it should target employment agencies who should try to employ the full spectrum of people

The Committee decided to have a joint task force (Public Policy Committee and Employment and Self-Determination Workgroup) to study the issue further and develop either a Council paper on Employment or recommendations to the Division on clarifying language.

Public Policy Additional Issues

Provider wages – the Committee supports DD provider wage and rate increases.

Donna reviewed legislative agendas from related organizations.

Session Legislative Conference Calls

The group decided that 2006 legislative conference calls will be on Fridays from 12:00 noon – 1:00. A flyer will be distributed to Council members with the dates and the toll-free number.

Donna announced the Disabilities Legislative Reception will be 5:30 – 8:00 pm on January 18 at the capitol. Council staff will conduct a Legislative Briefing that afternoon (2-5:00 pm) at the Phoenix Inn for anyone who is interested in going over legislative issues in detail and preparing for the Legislative Reception.

Federal Issues

Clare reviewed the status of federal issue. A handout is available.

Report to Council

Diana Zottman will make the Committee report to the Council. It will follow the agenda items.

Next Meeting

Debrief from the Legislative Briefing and Legislative Reception

Review Advocacy Day information/topics

Legislative Issues

Federal Issues